

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for scheduling resources to be used in a software development project comprising:
  - a customer providing information regarding a software development project to be completed;
  - a planning department initially reviewing the provided information and providing initial feedback prior to completing a detailed requirements analysis; and
  - the planning department reserving resources for the project based on the information prior to completing the detailed requirements analysis.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising after reserving resources:
  - upon completion of the detailed requirements analysis, the planning department offering the customer a contract describing the resources to be used for the project; and
  - upon approval of the contract by the customer, the planning department scheduling the reserved resources as agreed upon in the contract.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising after reserving resources and prior to completing the detailed requirements analysis:
  - the planning department confirming the reserved resources during the detailed requirements analysis.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the detailed requirements analysis comprises:  
a functional requirements modeling step.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the detailed requirements analysis comprises:  
a system requirements modeling step.
6. The method of claim 2, wherein the detailed requirements analysis comprises:  
an application integration modeling step.
7. The method of claim 2, wherein the detailed requirements analysis comprises:  
a contract development step.

8. A method for scheduling resources needed for a project comprising:
  - a planning department managing a customer's expectations about the project based on preliminary information the customer provides to the planning department;
  - the customer approving the project for further analysis;
  - the planning department reserving resources for the project based on the preliminary information and past experience;
  - the planning department confirming the reserved resources throughout the further analysis;
  - upon completion of the further analysis, the planning department offering the customer a contract describing the resources to be used for the project; and
  - upon approval of the contract by the customer, the planning department scheduling the resources agreed upon in the contract.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the managing of the customer's expectations comprises the planning department giving the customer an estimate of the likely duration of the project based on past experience and on the preliminary information provided by the customer.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein the customer's approval of the project for further analysis is based on the estimate of the likely duration of the project.
11. The method of claim 8 wherein the confirming of the reserved resources comprises determining whether the results of the further analysis indicate whether modifications are needed in the reserved resources.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein the further analysis comprises a functional requirements modeling step, a system requirements modeling step, an application integration modeling step, and a contract development step.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein the confirming of reserved resources occurs at the end of each step in the further analysis.
14. The method of claim 11 wherein, if it is determined that modifications are needed in the reserved resources, alerts are sent to projects dependent on a project for which modifications are needed in the reserved resources, the alerts informing the dependent projects that further analysis may be needed.
15. The method of claim 8 wherein the reserving of resources is aided by a tool that uses past experience and the preliminary information as input and produces an estimate of the resources required as output.

16. A method for scheduling resources to be used in a software development project comprising:
- a customer submitting information about the software development project to an IT department;
  - the IT department analyzing the feasibility of the project and estimating its cost;
  - the customer deciding whether to proceed with the project based on the analysis of feasibility and estimate of cost;
  - upon deciding to proceed, the customer prioritizing and funding the project;
  - the IT department reserving resources for the project;
  - the IT department modeling at least one requirement for the project;
  - upon completion of the requirement modeling, the IT department giving the customer an estimate of the resources needed for the project; and
  - booking the resources upon approval of the estimate by the customer.
17. The method of claim 16 further comprising, during the requirement modeling, the IT department determining whether the results of the modeling of a requirement indicate that modifications to the requirement are needed.
18. The method of claim 17 wherein, when modifications are needed, alerts are sent to projects dependent on a project for which modifications are needed in the reserved resources, the alerts informing the dependent projects that further analysis may be needed.

19. The process of claim 16 wherein the reserving of resources is aided by a tool that uses past experience and the information submitted by the customer as input and produces an estimate of the resources required as output.
20. A method for scheduling software releases for a computer system comprising:
- planning a series of releases for a given time period, each release having an initial allocation of capacity;
  - reviewing information regarding proposed software projects and providing initial estimates of cost and duration for such projects to customers for approval to move into detailed analysis;
  - on receiving approval for detailed analysis for each project, reviewing the planned series of releases and the initial estimate of cost and duration for the approved project and reserving capacity in a release having available capacity for the project approved for further analysis;
  - as detailed analyses and customer feedback change the scope of the projects approved for further analysis, adjusting the reserved capacity and, where available capacity is not present, moving the reserved capacity to a later release; and
  - as detailed analyses are completed and projects finally approved, booking the scheduled reservations in the releases.
21. The method of claim 20, wherein reviewing the planned series of releases and the initial estimate of cost and duration for the approved project further comprises:

- reviewing the preliminary test approach as determined in the initial review, the type of lab required, and the available resources in the required lab.
22. The method of claim 20, wherein reviewing the planned series of releases and the initial estimate of cost and duration for the approved project further comprises:
- reviewing dependencies with other projects.
23. The method of claim 20, wherein reviewing the planned series of releases and the initial estimate of cost and duration for the approved project further comprises:
- reviewing the available workforce in the required areas.
24. The method of claim 20, further comprising prior to planning a series of releases for a given time period:
- receiving from customers estimates of total time required for proposed projects in the given time period; and,
- adding the received estimates to get a total amount of time for the given time period and dividing the time into releases throughout the time period.
25. The method of claim 24, wherein the number and capacity of the planned releases is determined by the total amount of time received.
26. The method of claim 24, wherein an extra percentage of time can be added to the capacity allocated to each release.